

City of Springfield
Work Session Meeting

MINUTES OF THE
SPECIAL WORK SESSION MEETING OF
THE SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL HELD
MONDAY, JULY 31, 2006

The City of Springfield Council met in a special work session in the Library Meeting Room, 225 Fifth Street, Springfield, Oregon, on Monday, July 31, 2006 at 6:05 p.m., with Mayor Leiken presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Mayor Leiken and Councilors Woodrow, Ballew, Ralston, Lundberg, Pishioneri and Fitch (by conference phone). Also present were Assistant City Manager Cynthia Pappas, City Attorney Joe Leahy, City Recorder Amy Sowa and members of the staff.

1. Pioneer Parkway EmX Design, Environmental Assessment Update.

Transportation Manager Tom Boyatt presented the staff report on this item. On April 17, 2006, the City Council conducted a public hearing on proposed alternative EmX designs for the Pioneer Parkway corridor, and approved a LPA. During and subsequent to that meeting there were comments and concerns expressed about certain details of the design. The LPA was subsequently modified to address those concerns.

Lane Transit District (LTD) plans to release the project Environmental Assessment (EA) on or about August 15, 2006, for a 30-day public review and comment period. The discussion at this Work Session is intended to address Council issues prior to release of the EA for review and to present the current EA public review and adoption schedule.

LTD has provided graphics for the segments of the route where concerns have been expressed. City staff have annotated those graphics to focus on the specific concerns and how they are addressed in the modified LPA included in the current draft EA.

Mr. Boyatt introduced Project Manager Steph Viggiano who would be presenting the information for tonight's meeting. General Manager Mark Pangborn from Lane Transit District (LTD) and LTD Board Members Debbie Davis and Mike Eyster were also in the audience.

Mr. Viggiano said following a brief presentation, he would open it up for questions from the Council. He reviewed some of the questions that were referred to in the agenda packet.

Mr. Boyatt noted that the last sentence in the yellow text box on Attachment D, page 1 was inaccurate and could be eliminated.

Mr. Viggiano discussed parking issues along Pioneer Parkway East next to Aletha Lou's business. He said there were currently four spaces on the east side of the block. The Locally Preferred Alternative selected by Council preserved the parking and shifted the lane to the west. He said the property and business owners were both happy with the solution.

Councilor Ralston asked about a stop across the street from that location.

Mr. Viggiano said it was a bike shelter and would need to be removed or relocated.

Councilor Pishioneri asked about encroachment for the travel lane in that area.

Mr. Viggiano said it would be less than a travel lane. A bike lane would be combined with the path as it was along the rest of the corridor. It could be about 8 feet.

Councilor Ballew said it could be more dangerous putting the bike riders and pedestrians on the same path.

Mr. Viggiano said it was currently that way from A Street all the way to Gateway.

Councilor Pishioneri said the proposed parking would better accommodate the Justice Center once it was built.

Mr. Viggiano discussed the section of the corridor between Centennial and Highway 126. They had the opportunity to use part of the school property in that area and retain more of the median, which was the preferred option from the public. The Locally Preferred Alternative showed the lane encroaching about eighteen feet onto the school property. One concern was whether or not that would create a significant jog for drivers, but noted it was actually a fairly gentle taper. He discussed one of the options for the turn under the overpass to make it smoother.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if they would be replacing trees and other vegetation along that area when they moved the lane east.

Mr. Viggiano said it would be up to the City and the School District. The School District would like to participate in the decision. The School District had taken the issue of encroachment to the School Board.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if there was any City property there. There was some right-of-way.

Councilor Lundberg said that was a major intersection for students from Hamlin Middle School. She asked if the change would affect their safety.

Mr. Viggiano said the EmX service would operate the same as the regular bus and there would be no conflict. He said it would operate much the same as it did now in terms of the signals. Some widening of the road would mean longer crossing areas.

Mr. Viggiano referred to the map showing International Way and the EmX station in that area. He said a question had been asked regarding restrictions to access along this corridor. He said there were no access restrictions along the entire corridor. There were now three lanes, one in each direction and one center turn lane and two bike lanes. Under this Option, the bike lanes would be relocated and combined with the sidewalk and there would be four lanes, two EmX lanes and two travel lanes. He explained how cars would make turns by merging with the EmX lanes.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if there would be access issues with future development.

Mr. Viggiano said the only physical barrier would be where stations were located. Often large developments offered a lot of flexibility in locating access areas. He discussed Gateway and Harlow and noted that there were no access issues along this section of the corridor. The operation of the service through Gateway and Harlow was in mixed traffic. He said they hoped to have signal priority at signalized intersections and the stations would be EmX style stations with raised platforms. He said it would be similar to Franklin Boulevard in Glenwood. A more significant station would be built at the Gateway Mall. He discussed the intersection at Gateway and Beltline.

Councilor Lundberg asked about the size of the EmX buses.

Mr. Viggiano said they were 60 feet long, which was the same length as the articulated buses. The regular buses were 40 feet long. Mr. Viggiano said the Environmental Assessment would be released to the public on August 15, there would be a 30-day review period, comments would be solicited and responses to those comments would be prepared. All of that information would be provided to Council when they met to discuss this on October 9 for a work session and on October 16 for a decision.

Councilor Lundberg asked about the sidewalk along Harlow Road and if it would be moved.

Mr. Viggiano said there was no widening of the street in that area, only improvements such as stations and structures. He noted that the EmX stops were very brief, about fifteen seconds.

Councilor Ballew asked about financing and what was still needed. She also asked Mr. Viggiano to review the construction schedule.

Mr. Viggiano said LTD would be submitting an application for Small Starts Funds. Some material had already been sent for review on this application, and had received a favorable response. They would be asking for 80 percent of the funding for this project through this grant, but may only receive 60 percent. The rest of the money was from local funds. LTD had set aside money in a reserve account for that match. LTD also received the Connect Oregon Grant to help fill the gap. He discussed the construction schedule. Some of the corridor was currently being constructed along the MLK Parkway, and some would be built this summer along RiverBend Drive. Most of the construction would take place in 2008 and 2009. The Gateway Mall Station could be built in 2007. There would be construction impacts for two construction seasons. There would be very little construction along Gateway and Harlow. LTD was very sensitive to construction impacts and had worked very closely with businesses and commuters on areas already begun.

Councilor Lundberg asked how the short stops worked on the EmX. She discussed the Lindale Apartments and if regular buses would go through that area.

Mr. Viggiano said buses hadn't traveled through Lindale in the last couple of years. Currently residents from that complex caught the bus at GameFarm Road and Hayden Bridge/Harlow Road. The EmX service on Harlow Road would actually be closer for them. He said they hadn't fully designed the rest of the service, but there would continue to be service on 5th Street and Hayden Bridge with conventional buses. They wanted to continue to serve the streets that were currently served with the exception of GameFarm. Mr. Viggiano discussed the short stop time for the EmX

buses. He said some ways they would reduce the boarding time included not having people pay their fare on board and board through any door. The boarding platforms would also be about the same height as the bus so patrons would not need to climb up to get in. Las Vegas had a similar system and they reported an average 12 second stop. LTD was estimating a 15 second stop. One exception was if someone boarded in a wheelchair. The current system required people in wheelchairs to be secured which took time for the bus operator. The EmX would have one wheelchair bay that would be rear-facing, unsecured, but with some constraints. A second wheelchair bay would be front-facing and secured. Fifteen seconds would be a typical boarding.

Councilor Ralston said it would be nice if the buses could pull out to get off the road. He asked how LTD would know if someone was on the bus without paying the fee.

Mr. Viggiano said there would be occasional fare checks by fare checkers. Those that did not have a bus pass would be subject to significant fines.

Councilor Ralston asked about an emergency situation and someone jumped on the bus without buying a pass.

Councilor Pishioneri noted there was a law to protect those that broke a law for emergency purposes.

Councilor Fitch complimented LTD and City staff on looking at the issues and working well in coming up with solutions. This would be a system that would work well for passengers of LTD and all citizens in Springfield.

Councilor Ralston discussed pull-offs to allow the buses to get out of traffic.

Mr. Leahy said an issue had arisen with two property owners. One of the last things property owners wanted was the pull-off because it would take additional property. That was why pull-offs were only to be built in certain areas where the property owners approved.

Mr. Viggiano said there was a lot of design work yet to do and LTD would be working with Springfield staff and providing Council updates as they proceeded. A lot of it would come down to design refinements, such as turnouts. There were a lot of design questions yet to be resolved.

Councilor Pishioneri discussed fines for those that didn't have fare. He asked who would enforce that and who would receive the fines.

Mr. Viggiano discussed fare checkers in other systems and how their process worked.

Councilor Pishioneri agreed that pull-outs were better for traffic, but he understood the hesitation by property owners. He asked LTD to try to get as many as possible without raising issues with property owners.

Councilor Pishioneri asked if an Environmental Impact Study would be needed following the EA Study.

Mr. Viggiano said all the technical analysis had been done and there was nothing that would take it up to the level of an Environmental Impact. LTD started out doing an Environmental Impact

Statement (EIS), but were told by the Federal Transit Administration that they only needed an EA.

Councilor Ballew asked how people could buy tickets.

Mr. Viggiano said some would buy monthly passes and others could pay at machines set up at each station. There could be a possibility that credit cards could be used at those machines.

Mayor Leiken asked if LTD would continue to have neighborhood buses.

Mr. Viggiano said it was still the concept to have smaller buses serve the neighborhoods. LTD did intend to start buying smaller buses for the neighborhood service. LTD would work with the neighborhoods to find out where they should go. It would be to connect EmX, neighborhoods, schools, shopping and parks.

Mayor Leiken asked if LTD was confident they could fill the funding gap and if it was still going to be on the United Front. He discussed federal funding issues. He recommended having the Board Members discuss this with the legislative delegation.

Mr. Pangborn said that looking at all funding needs, the federal portion was the most difficult. The Federal Budget was in a severe deficit because of expenditures for the war. This project would be an earmark. Mr. Pangborn was just back in Washington DC last week and met with staff from all Congressional delegations so they were all aware of the project. The delegation would be there, and it would be important to go back to the United Front list. If the Federal money came through, the local share would not be a problem with the money in reserves and the Connect Oregon funds. Sacred Heart agreed to contribute the value of the land where the corridor was going in and there were other options. LTD was receiving a lot of pressure from the major employers in Gateway to get the project done.

Mayor Leiken noted the amount of development in the Gateway area. He wanted to make sure LTD was feeling confident with this and there was concern because Congress had been talking about getting rid of earmarks. He said this project would be a showcase for LTD.

Mr. Pangborn said this was a critical piece because of the employment areas in Springfield and Eugene. He discussed connections within the area with this system.

Councilor Lundberg said Springfield should be proud we work to find transportation solutions. The significant portion of this project was in Springfield. She said she had received a thank you note from someone on Hayden Bridge thanking the City for putting up the 20 mile speed limits. Along with finding the transportation solutions, we needed to be as responsive as possible to those affected by the construction.

Mayor Leiken said he appreciated the work the staffs from LTD and the City had done over the years to get to this point. He would like to continue this positive relationship. What LTD was doing throughout Springfield was a very important piece to the transportation system.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:45 pm.

Minutes Recorder – Amy Sowa

Sid Leiken
Mayor

Attest:

Amy Sowa
City Recorder